

Sugar wasn't always sold in the neat paper packages that we buy at the supermarket these days. Before the turn of the century, it came in loaves that looked something like oversized, upside-down ice cream cones; the grocer just broke off pieces for his customers. So, many western mountains and hills including the ridge at the southern edge of this park were named after the familiar "sugarloaf." An excellent view of Sugarloaf Ridge can be obtained from the intersection of Highway 12 and Adobe Canyon Road.

The park is located northeast of Kenwood in the Mayacamas Mountains between the Sonoma and Napa valleys. Elevations within the 2,700 acre park range from 600 feet at the entrance to 2,729 feet at the top of Bald Mountain, which overlooks the Napa Valley with Mount Saint Helena to the north. On very clear days the view includes portions of the San Francisco Bay Area and even a glimpse of the Sierra Nevada.

Twenty-one miles of trail wind through three distinct ecological systems: chaparral-covered ridges, oak/fir forestland along the open meadows, and redwood forest in the canyon of Sonoma Creek. Trees include big-leaf maple, madrone, California laurel, gray pine, Douglas-fir, alder, California buckeye, coast redwood, and several varieties of live and deciduous oaks. The chaparral community includes manzanita, chamise, California lilac, coyote bush, toyon, and winebush. As you hike, watch out for poison oak and, along the creek, stinging nettles.

Sonoma Creek begins in the park and runs for three miles through its southern portion. It's too shallow for swimming, and often dries up by late summer, so fishing (for trout) is best in late spring/early summer. The creek is not planted. Season dates and stream closures vary each year; check the current California Fish and Game regulations. Anglers over 16 must have a fishing license.

Summers at Sugarloaf Ridge are hot and dry. High temperatures are often in the 90s, but it usually cools down in the evening to the 40s. Ocean fog sometimes penetrates this far inland. Most of the park's forty inches or so of rain come between November and April. Light snow falls occasionally. Wintertime low temperatures drop into the 30s with daytime highs in the 50s and 60s.

People find this area most enjoyable during the spring and fall. After the winter rains, there is a picturesque 25-foot waterfall along Sonoma Creek below the campground. Also in the spring, the park comes alive with wildflowers including California poppies, cream cups, lupine, penstemon, buttercups, several varieties of pea, shooting stars, trillium, and Indian warrior. Less common are golden fairy lantern, zigadene, and fritillaria. In the early summer come clarkia, scarlet larkspur, farewell-to-spring, Mariposa lillies, monkey flowers, and Indian pinks. Yellow star thistles and tarweed are common in late summer.

Along the creek near the entrance to the campground, there is a visitor center with general information as well as a guide to the natural and cultural history of the park.

CAMPING AND PICNICKING

The park's family campground and picnic area lie in the meadow near Sonoma Creek at 1,200 feet elevation. Each of the 50 campsites has a table and fire ring. Flush toilets and drinking water are nearby, though there are no washbasins or showers. The sites will accommodate trailers and campers up to 24 feet long. The 16 family picnic sites have tables and barbecues, and there is a large parking area nearby for daytime visitors.

The group camp area, which will accommodate up to 100 people, has large barbecues, fire rings, water faucets, pit toilets and several small corrals for horses.

THE WAPPO

The Wappo Indian village of Wilikos was located here at the headwaters of Sonoma Creek before the first Spanish settlers came to California. Almost every trace of the village has now disappeared, and we can only wonder what life was like in Wilikos.

The houses people lived in were dome-shaped huts as much as 40 feet long, made of poles and grass thatch. The one hundred or so residents lived in about forty of these dwellings. A larger structure, a sweathouse, in the center of the village was used by the men for smoking, steam baths, and various ceremonial purposes.

If you had visited here then, you might have seen women gathering acorns and other seed crops, or working on baskets or tanning hides for clothing. The men might be preparing for the next hunt, or out in the hills actually looking for game. Then again you might have arrived during a festival or ceremony and participated in games, dancing, and feasting.

You might have talked with the chief of war, or of ceremonials, or of news. These "chiefs" were not absolute rulers, but served the community more nearly like consultants — each with an area of special expertise. If you needed medical help, for example, there were several specialists to choose from — none of whom took payment unless you were cured. At the time of your visit, some of the villagers would very likely be away, traveling to the sea to gather fish or other seafood as well as clam or abalone shells for trade, or walking to the area now known as Anderson Marsh State Historic Park near Clear Lake to fish or trade with the Pomo Indians of that area. Obsidian for arrow points and other purposes was obtained from quarries on the slopes of Mount Saint Helena.

The Wappo resisted Spanish intrusion more strongly than some other Indian groups. Their name is a corruption of the Spanish word *guappo*, which means "brave" or "daring." But though they were successful in resisting military takeover, their numbers were sharply reduced by the disastrous cholera epidemic of 1833 and the equally terrible smallpox epidemic of 1838. Most of those who survived were eventually relocated to the Mendocino Indian reservation.

RANCHING

American settlers who came early to California were interested in the fertile land of the valleys, but by the 1860s and '70s some of them had settled in the hills near Sugarloaf Ridge. Farming here was limited and marginal. One settler supplemented his income by making charcoal for sale in San Francisco. Eventually, Sugarloaf Ridge was owned by "gentlemen farmers" whose ranch operations were run by hired managers while they tended their businesses in town.

The State bought the property in 1920 in order to dam the creek and provide water for

Sonoma State Hospital. But property owners along the creek objected, and until World War II use of the area was limited to camping, picnicking, and a Boy Scout camp. In 1942 the area was leased out for grazing, and in 1964 it became part of the State Park System.

For more information:

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park
2605 Adobe Canyon Road
Kenwood, CA 95452-9004
(707) 833-5712

or
Sonoma District
20 East Spain Street
Sonoma, CA 95476-5729
(707) 938-1519



State of California • The Resources Agency
Department of Parks & Recreation
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Pete Wilson, Governor
Douglas P. Wheeler, Secretary for Resources
Donald W. Murphy, Director, Dept. Parks & Recreation

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park

also includes
*Creekside Nature Trail Guide
and hiking map to
Hood Mountain Regional Park*



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764

CREEKSIDE NATURE TRAIL

This trail provides a good opportunity to see many of the park's plants and, with a little luck, some of its animals. The park staff will be happy to answer any questions you may have, or help with plant and animal identification.

The trail is an easy three-quarter mile walk that will take you less than an hour. The numbered posts correspond to the numbered paragraphs in the following text. The trail begins at the picnic area near the day use parking lot, and ends at the campground.

1. Above you is a coast live oak, an evergreen that supplied the Wappo Indians with acorns. They ground the acorns into a meal, leached the meal to remove the tannic acid and then made acorn soup, mush, or cakes.

2. When the creek rises during the rainy season it undercuts the bank and washes soil downstream. As the water flows, it is deflected from one side of the channel to the other. Small beaches build up opposite the undercuts. Note that plant roots help to hold the soil in place.

3. This little Douglas-fir beside the trail may one day tower over its neighbors, but right now it is struggling to compete for sunlight and nutrients.

4. The coyote bush is named for the animal that the California Indians revered for its cleverness and cunning. The long and straight branches of this shrub were used by the Indians to make arrow shafts.

5. Cherry plum trees like this one can be found here and there throughout this area. They are probably the naturalized offspring of plum trees planted by early ranchers. White flowers cover this tree during the Spring. The fruit, which ripens during the summer, is small but attractive to birds and browsing deer.

6. Oregon white oaks like the one right here beside the creek are popular with local birds of prey. From open perching places high in this tree, great horned owls can swoop silently down on field mice, gophers, and rabbits.

7. Unlike most ferns, western bracken ferns enjoy sunny, exposed areas. The spindly plants nearby are cow parsnips, a member of the carrot family.

8. Commonly found along streams, the white alder is fast-growing but rather short-lived. In winter, when it loses its leaves, the drooping male catkins and female cones appear.

9. Do you recognize the tall vine on this tree? Poison oak takes on many forms and colors, but the leaves are always lobed and typically come in clusters of three. The oil from all parts of the plant can cause severe skin irritation for most people, though the Wappo were fairly immune and used the plant to make a black dye.

10. Lichens like those covering this rock are composed of a one-celled alga living in a fungus body. The alga contains the chlorophyll that uses sunlight to make food. The fungus provides shelter and takes minerals from the rock. Notice how many of the plants near the rock are stunted. The blue-green rock itself is serpentine. It is common in the coastal mountains and tends to inhibit plant growth.

Follow the short trail 145 feet to the bench.

11. This is a good spot to stop and enjoy the view. In the distance to the west lies Hood Mountain, which is only one foot higher than Bald Mountain here in the park. You can't see Bald Mountain from here, however, because a black

oak blocks the view. Note the sharply pointed lobes on the oak's large dark green leaves.

12. In the streambed is another plant that is best left alone. Stinging nettles are gray-green in color with small, green flowers in loose, stringy clusters.

13. An Oregon ash is lying over the creek. Note its long, light-green leaves. Above the creek is a big-leaf maple. Often found near shady streams, it can reach one-hundred feet in height when growing in the open.

14. This plant is called the snowberry for the white berries that grow along its stem in the spring. Don't eat them, or any other berries you aren't sure about. Even though other animals may eat them, they may not be safe for people.

15. From here you can enjoy a panoramic view of the ridge for which the park is named. Much of it is volcanic in origin, and crumbly and dangerous to climb. Turkey vultures can often be seen soaring on the air currents above the ridge.

16. The small holes in the huge California bay-laurel (also called the Oregon myrtle) that stands next to the trail were probably made by the yellow-bellied sapsucker in its search for food. The aromatic leaves of the laurel are sometimes used to discourage insects.

17. Close beside this small stream is a Pacific willow with long, slender leaves. The Wappo used its stems and branches for basket weaving and for construction of their houses. On the left is a blue elderberry that produces clusters of bluish-white berries in summer.

This trail ends at the campground straight ahead of you. We hope that you have enjoyed your hike. The trail was constructed by the Youth Conservation Corps.

Please Help

Follow these "good neighbor" rules to preserve park values and assure a pleasant stay for everyone:

Pets must be controlled at all times. Dogs must be on a leash no more than six feet long, and must be kept inside a vehicle or tent at night. They are permitted in the campground and picnic area. They are not allowed on the park trails.

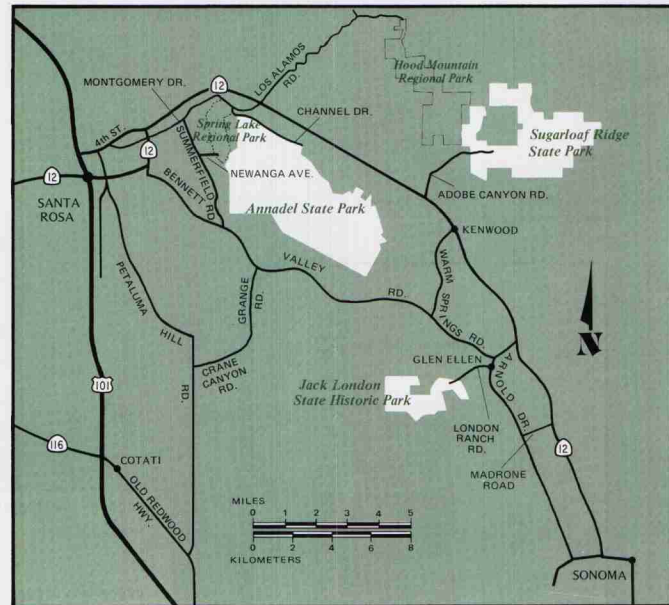
Fires are allowed only in the fire rings provided. You may use your portable stove or barbeque, but only on the established camping and picnic areas. Because down wood decays to produce the humus needed for plant growth, wood gathering is not allowed. Firewood can be purchased at the entrance station.

Smoking is limited to developed areas. The park becomes tinder-dry in summer and the fire hazard is high, so please don't smoke on the trails.

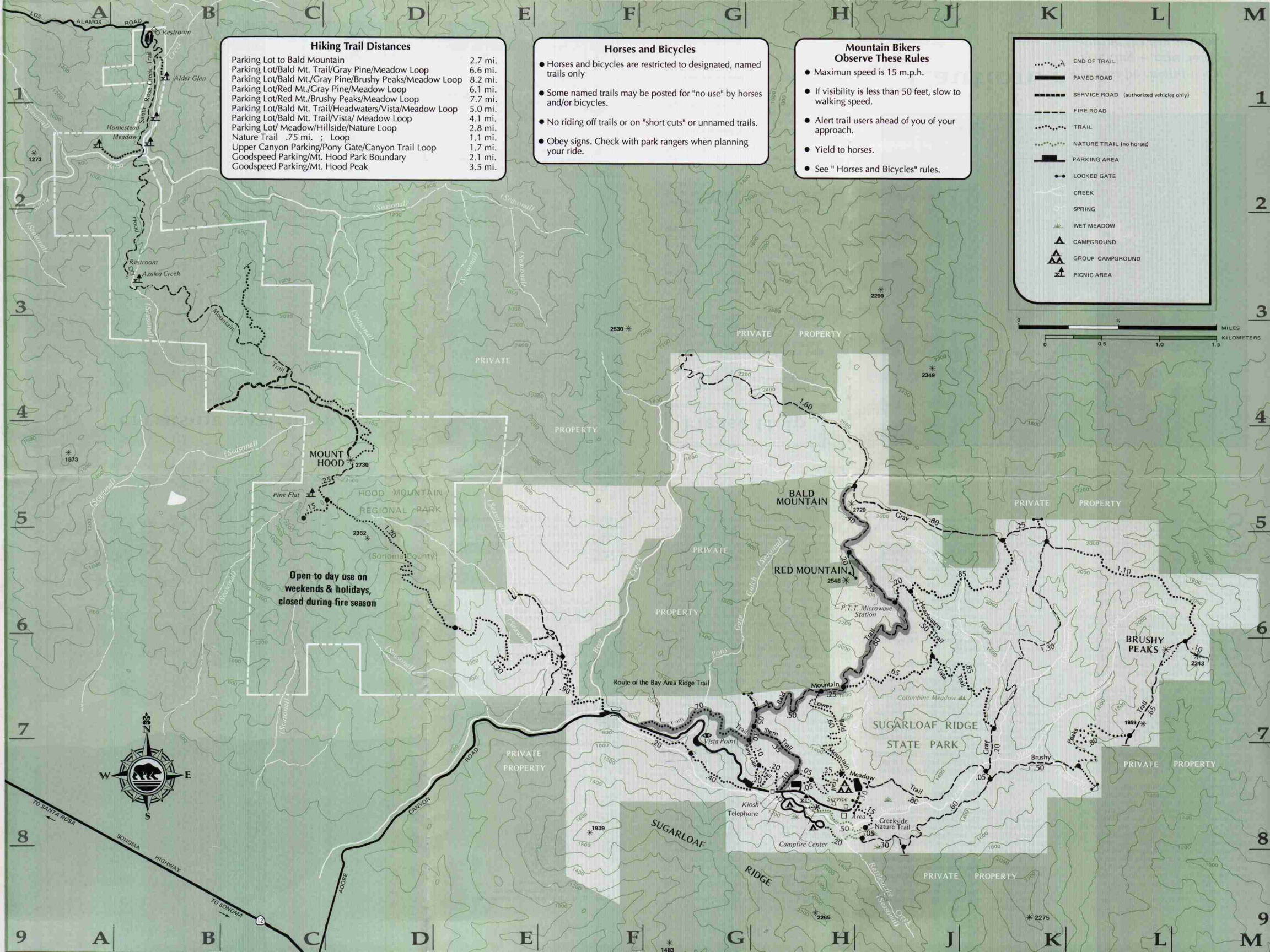
Quiet hours are 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Generators may only be operated between the hours of 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Plants and wildlife are protected. Don't pick the flowers. Their seeds make next year's flowers. For their welfare and for your safety, please do not feed or attempt to pet the deer, raccoons or other wild animals.

Please secure food items at night. The raccoons may steal them!



Caution. . . Please be careful when smoking - especially during the dry season.



Hiking Trail Distances

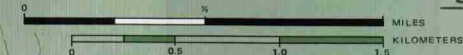
Parking Lot to Bald Mountain	2.7 mi.
Parking Lot/Bald Mt. Trail/Gray Pine/Meadow Loop	6.6 mi.
Parking Lot/Bald Mt./Gray Pine/Brushy Peaks/Meadow Loop	8.2 mi.
Parking Lot/Red Mt./Gray Pine/Meadow Loop	6.1 mi.
Parking Lot/Red Mt./Brushy Peaks/Meadow Loop	7.7 mi.
Parking Lot/Bald Mt. Trail/Headwaters/Vista/Meadow Loop	5.0 mi.
Parking Lot/Bald Mt. Trail/Vista/ Meadow Loop	4.1 mi.
Parking Lot/ Meadow/Hillside/Nature Loop	2.8 mi.
Nature Trail .75 mi. ; Loop	1.1 mi.
Upper Canyon Parking/Pony Gate/Canyon Trail Loop	1.7 mi.
Goodspeed Parking/Mt. Hood Park Boundary	2.1 mi.
Goodspeed Parking/Mt. Hood Peak	3.5 mi.

Horses and Bicycles

- Horses and bicycles are restricted to designated, named trails only
- Some named trails may be posted for "no use" by horses and/or bicycles.
- No riding off trails or on "short cuts" or unnamed trails.
- Obey signs. Check with park rangers when planning your ride.

Mountain Bikers Observe These Rules

- Maximum speed is 15 m.p.h.
- If visibility is less than 50 feet, slow to walking speed.
- Alert trail users ahead of you of your approach.
- Yield to horses.
- See "Horses and Bicycles" rules.



Open to day use on
weekends & holidays,
closed during fire season